

WOMAN AS VIRGIN GODDESSPolarity between the Goddess and the Temptress

In a general way we have seen how the Woman as evil temptress is viewed as the primary cause of man's downfall. She leads him away from his true goal, or from his proper end. She may also bring about the downfall of herself as well. The woman as goddess, on the other hand, becomes the cause of man's salvation. She saves him and leads him to the fulfillment of his being.

Woman in western society has become polarized between these two extremes. She has been seen by man as either a temptress or as a goddess. We will look at this polarity through the interdisciplinary categories of psychology, ethics, religion, and politics. First of all, psychologists have long been aware of the phenomenon of projection from one person onto another of a particular kind of identity. Jung, as we have seen, describes this in one case as the projection of a man's negative or positive anima onto a woman. In the positive projection, woman is seen as his helpmate, as able to lift him out of himself into something better. In its negative projection woman tries to drag the man down, to tempt him in a way that he is unable to withstand. In Four Archetypes, Jung states: "The qualities associated with it (the mother archetype) are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility...On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate."<sup>1</sup> Woman, unless she has a strong sense of her own true individual identity becomes the victim of these projections and begins to see herself as either a temptress or goddess. In any society the dominant group tends to form the identity of the subdominant groups. This occurs in race, class, religion, and sex groupings. In a patriarchal society such as ours when the dominant group which is men, project onto the subordinate group of women, a rigid psychological polarity between goddess and temptress it is difficult for the subordinate group to extricate itself.

This psychological polarity is reinforced in ethics and morality. Women have often been told that they are 'better' than men. This is true unless, of course, they choose to become 'bad'. In teenage dating situations they are told that they must set limits because boys will try 'to get what they can'. Boys are given a wide variety of models of general moral behavior as well as sex behavior to follow. The line between good and bad is extremely thin. Girls, on the other hand, are given explicit guidelines and told what is good and what is bad. In more sophisticated works in ethics written by philosophers, we initially find the same polarity. Aristotle states that a woman is good by virtue of having true opinion, but a man is good by virtue of reasoned judgement. Kierkegaard also states that goodness is immediate in women whereas it is a complicated process of reasoning and will for men.<sup>2</sup> John Stuart Mill in his classic work entitled On the Subjection of Woman, is the first philosopher since Plato to question this attitude. He states:

"We are perpetually told that women are better than men, by those who are totally opposed to treating them as if they were as good; so that the saying has passed into a piece of tiresome cant, intended to put a complimentary face upon an injury."<sup>3</sup>

It is perhaps in religion that we find the most explicit statement of the polarity between the goddess and the temptress. If we accept the fact that in North America the religion that has had the strongest impact on personal identity has been Christianity with its roots in Judaism, it is important to look there for evidence of the polarity. In Ecclesiasticus we find: "Woman's Beauty has led many astray; it kindles desires like a flame." (9:9) This attitude is echoed further: "No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman, may a sinner's lot be hers!" (25:19) The danger of woman is expressed continuously: "A man's spite is preferable to a woman's kindness; women give rise to shame and reproach." (41:26) Woman tempts man into leaving his true goals. On the other hand, she also saves him. In the book of Wisdom, we find wisdom personified as a woman (Sophia):

"I entreated, and the spirit of Wisdom came to me  
I esteemed her more than scepters and thrones;  
compared with her, all gold is a pinch of sand,  
and beside her silver ranks as mud.  
I loved her more than health or beauty,  
preferred her to the light,  
since her radiance never sleeps.  
In her company all good things came to me,  
at her hand riches not to be numbered." (7:7-11)

Solomon, the author of this book, is reputed to have had 700 wives and 300 concubines! He loved woman as idealized in wisdom, but he could hardly have gotten to know individually the character of his spouses.

The polarity between woman as good and woman as evil became personified in Christianity through the polarity between Mary and Eve. Through the tradition Eve decided to defy God's orders and ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. She then tempted Adam to do the same. The punishment, as we have seen, was to bring mortality to the human race. In short, by her defiance she brought death. Mary, on the other hand, agreed to do the Lord's will. When the angel asked her to become the mother of Christ she said: "Fiat!", that is "Let it be done". She is then considered to have brought eternal life back into the world by bringing Christ whose resurrection conquered death. Eve then is the woman who leads to death, to man's downfall while Mary is the woman who leads to life, to man's salvation. The polarity between woman as evil and woman as good was incorporated into the heart of Christianity. And since Christianity became for many centuries, the dominant religion of the western world, the polarity entered into the heart of the identity of western woman.

The polarity between Mary and Eve had a further dynamic. In addition to a consideration of the orientation of the will towards defiance or obedience of God women were polarized around their sexuality. Eve became the symbol for carnal sexuality and Mary for chastity. It followed then that a woman was bad if she sought or gave sexual pleasure and a woman was good if she remained virginal. The evil temptress became a sexual being while the virgin goddess lived an angelic life. Mary became used as a model in churches and schools, a model of passivity, docility, and prudishness while Eve lurked as the dangerous sister ready to ensnare her unsuspecting victims. Individual women became trapped between two extremes neither of which were desirable or able to be achieved.

There are several good sources which can be used to exemplify this religious polarity. Three which we have used successfully are: Not in God's Image, an anthology of which includes primary source material from ancient and medieval writers; The Second Sex in which de Beauvoir traces the historical and literary aspects of this polarity, and Sexism and Religion, edited by Rosemary Ruether which has critical articles by feminist theologians. After introducing the notion of the polarity, the student is then given supportive historical data which fills in the details. As more data becomes available, new sources can be brought forward and others deleted.



Another area in which the polarity between woman as good and woman as evil is evident is political. In the discussion of the history of prostitution we saw that Engels recognized the division of women into two classes: wives and mistresses. Here we find the same association of the wife with the good woman who will save her husband and the mistress with the woman who takes the man away from his proper responsibilities. Finally in rape it will be seen that the girl who most clearly resembles the 'virgin goddess' archetype will be supported by the judicial system, whereas the woman who more resembles the 'evil temptress' will find it nearly impossible to get legal support even if she is the victim who was more clearly raped.

Woman, then has been polarized by man and has incorporated this polarization herself and passed it on to her daughters and sons. It is crucial to recognize the way in which structures have become stereotyped and function daily in our lives. We are considered to be good or evil, a temptress or a goddess. Part of the important task of women's studies is to learn how to recognize situations in which this polarization takes place. Then we must develop the necessary skills to break out of this polarization into a fuller and more accurate identity. This involves learning on many levels. First, we must uncover the relatively unknown facts of woman's history. In the case of the goddess structure this means looking at the history of female goddesses. Then we must learn how to revalue those aspects of women's history that have been devalued. In this chapter this will involve another look at virginity, the Bible, Mariology, and the history of specific women with religious vocations. Next we must discover how this polarity functions in institutional structures such as laws around rape and adultery. Finally, we will see it in modern literature as it affects the poetic imagination of men and women writers. When women are able to understand the way in which structures function through an historical context then they will begin to become able to incorporate or reject those structures which are truly a part of their identity.

### Goddess History

There have been several periods in western history during which goddesses were worshipped. In fact today, among some feminist theologians goddess worship

is being rediscovered. Therefore, it is an important function of women's studies to bring this phenomenon into the foreground. We will do this first by introducing certain facts of goddess history and second by suggesting various ways in which these facts can be interpreted.

The sources for the facts of goddess worship are drawn from archeology, classical literature, art history, and studies in the history of religion. Some important studies were made in this area long before the women's movement became interested. The White Goddess by Robert Graves, The Great Mother by Erich Neumann, The Mother Goddess by E.O. James and The Golden Bough by James Fraser, constitute four such works. More recently Sarah Pomeroy's Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves and Merlin Stone's When God Was A Woman and Carol Christ's "Why Women Need the Goddess," include a feminist analysis along with historical data. In all these works, however, there is the consistent claim that goddess worship is an important aspect of religion and that it adds enormously to the emerging sense of woman's dignity over and against a patriarchal society. The most difficult prejudice which they all try to dispel is the belief that goddess worship is part of a pagan, and therefore inferior sort of culture. Patriarchy has, through Judaism and Christianity affirmed a predominantly male God. The psychological implication which follows from this affirmation appears to be that femaleness is an inferior kind of existence that God created only in order to propagate the species. Eve was created out of Adam's side because he should not be alone. The even stronger claim is made that patriarchy ruthlessly destroyed goddess worship through the conquering of montheistic tribes which worshiped a single male God (Jahweh). These tribes overturned pagan temples which often worshiped several female goddesses in mediterranean areas. Christianity continued the destruction through its overcoming of the Greek and Roman religions. Rachel hid the household Gods from Jacob; the worship of Baal, the consort of the Goddess Ugarit (in the 4th century B.C.) and the consort of Ashtoreth (1200-586 B.C.) were condemned; and pagan temples were reconsecrated to the Christian trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> Goddess worship, for all intents and purposes was destroyed.

Who were the goddesses and what did they do? Symbolically the goddess has appeared in many forms. She begins usually as a goddess of creation and of fertility. Statues show her to be almost entirely womb. She is enormously fat and gives the earth its generative powers. The Venus of Willendorf (circa 30,000 B.C.), a Paleolithic statue of the primordial goddess is perhaps the most famous representation of this image. A) She also appears in her function as sustainer and supporter of life. Here we find several statues of women goddesses with bared

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breasts. The milk flowing from the breasts supports the life which has come forth through the womb. B) Sometimes the symbols depict a woman with several breasts. C) The Goddess is able to help all her devoted children at the same time.

In agricultural societies the goddess reigned everywhere. Merlin Stone states that "The archaeological artifacts suggest that in all the Neolithic and early Chalcolithic societies the Divine Ancestress, generally referred to by most writers as the Mother Goddess, was revered as the supreme deity. Now She provided not only human life but a controllable food supply as well."<sup>5</sup> This would be from the period of approximately 30,000 B.C. until the last Goddess temples were closed by the emperors of Rome and Byzantium in 500 A.D. The perspective of time shows that goddess worship functioned for 25 thousand years while worship of a male God has been dominant for only 5 thousand years. Time, of course, does not have any bearing on the truth or falsity of a religious belief. It does, however, demonstrate that goddess worship answered human needs for an extraordinarily long period in human history. Given the active search on the part of feminist theologians for new ways of relating to the divine it may very well be that parts of society has turned again away from the dominantly male centered worship of Judaism and Christianity towards either a reincarnation of female divinity or towards a sex neutral divine force. Mary Daly in Beyond God the Father seeks to uncover a relation to divine 'Being'. She claims:

"Why indeed must 'God' be a noun? Why not a verb?-the most active and dynamic of all? ...The anthropomorphic symbols for God may be intended to convey personality, but they fail to convey that God is Be-ing."<sup>7</sup>

Others have turned to the east for a relation with 'cosmic consciousness' and 'enlightenment' which goes beyond the male or female incarnations of any particular religion. Still others have tried to reform Christianity and Judaism. The quest for transcendence, however, is an important dimension of the women's movement as it is of all liberation movements, and the search for affective ways of living out this quest will continue. It is not surprising that there have emerged as many different ways among women as there have been among men.

In addition to the two above mentioned symbolic manifestations of the female goddess through an emphasis on the womb or on the breasts, she has also been worshiped as the goddess of death, as the snake goddess, as a goddess with a male child, as the goddess of beauty, the goddess of wisdom, and in the three related forms of virgin child, mother, and old hag. These symbols overlap one



another and are not mutually exclusive. The goddess of death we have already encountered in Lilith. D) This goddess is the obvious counterpart of the goddess of life and of woman's identification with the earth. From ashes to ashes and from dust we come and to dust we will return. She who gives life has the obvious power to take it away. The snake goddess is an interesting evolution in the goddess symbol. The snakes represent power of the will, so the goddess is not only controlling the fate of people through her spiritualized biological functions, but she also is developing uniquely human strengths. She is in control of power. Many discoveries have been made of figurines of female goddesses with snakes. E) The most recent is a statue on the island of Crete (circa 2000-800 B.C.). This discovery has also revealed some writing which is in a language unable so far to be deciphered. Feminist historians are eagerly awaiting the solution of the decoding in the hopes that it will shed further light on goddess history.

#### A. Isis

One of the most interesting symbols to western minds is the statue with the mother and male child. Because of the power of the image of the Virgin Mary with Christ as infant, and of its continuous reappearance every Christmas on cards, calendars, and in creches we have incorporated it into our lives much more than the symbols of womb, breasts, or snakes. F) The mother with male child becomes the dominant image of a goddess-like woman (for the Virgin Mary is not technically a goddess as we shall see). In western goddess history, this image was worshiped for centuries in the figure of Isis. G) Isis was the sister-wife of Osiris. At his death a new lover is brought to her and then sacrificed. She is clearly the dominant of the pair. According to Stone, "The Egyptians wrote, 'In the beginning there was Isis, Oldest of the Old. She was the Goddess from whom all becoming arose.'<sup>8</sup> She was the daughter of Keb and Nut (earth and sky) and the mother of Horus. She later became identified with Demeter in Greek mythology. Her religion flourished from 3000 B.C. in Egypt until it was finally overthrown in the middle of the 6th century A.D. Although Isis was often represented with her male child, this symbol did not exhaust her significance. In addition to the capacities for tenderness, care and healing associated with maternal goddesses, she also had powers associated with male gods. "(Isis) had dominion over lightening, thunder, and the winds. She is the creator, for she divided earth from heaven, assigned languages to nations, and

invented alphabets and astronomy."<sup>9</sup> Her symbolic representation of these functions is without child, and riding on two magnificent wings. It is interesting to note that this particular representation has become popularized in contemporary jewelery and embroidered in clothes worn by feminists who are searching for new religious symbols.

Both women and men worshiped Isis. In fact, Cleopatra appeared to believe that she was in incarnation of Isis. The particular worship of Isis began in Egypt and spread to Europe, especially in Italy. Augustus, in 28 B.C. forbade the building of temples to Isis within particular areas. Tiberius later persecuted priests of Isis. Caligula, however, decided to favor her and built a temple in her honour.<sup>10</sup> She kept an important position in Roman society until the 6th century A.D., when her worship was repressed indefinitely by

After the demise of Isis there has not been a religion in the western world which gave a female goddess the dominant role.

#### B. Athena (Roman - Minerva)

By far the most powerful of the females Olympian goddesses, Athena is best known in her symbolic form as protectress of Athens. H) She is the goddess of war when it is a war of self-defence. She is generous and merciful, intelligent, and a competent mediator of disputes. In fact, she is considered to be the inspiration behind the development of law in Athens. The Acropolis is her great temple in Greece. Her statue nearly filled the interior of the Parthanon. H<sup>1</sup>) "The height of the figure was forty feet, on a pedestal twelve feet high."<sup>11</sup>

Although Athena had tremendous power and prestige she was none-the-less subordinate to the male god Zeus (Roman Jupiter). He fathered her alone. According to tradition, she was born a complete adult and fully armed from the head of Zeus. Pomeroy interprets this symbol: "Because she herself was born of man, Athena is able to affirm that the father is the true parent of any child."<sup>12</sup> As we shall see in the Earth Mother archetype Greek philosophers continued this belief in their claim that it is men who give the form and life to the child while women provide only the matter or body. In the myth however, Zeus gives everything to Athena. It is interesting to note that there is a fuller version of the birth of Athena which her own priests perpetuated. It was said that Zeus raped Metis. An oracle stated that this child was a girl, but if there was a second child, it would be a son who would dethrone Zeus. He there-



fore seduced Metis again and as she relaxed, he swallowed her. After a while he got a terrible headache. Another God cut his head with an ax, and out sprang Athena. In any event, the birth seemed to be possible without the help of a female, and Zeus' dominance was assured. All the goddesses of Olympus revolved around him. Therefore, although today many are struck by the power and strength of Athena it is important to remember that she was not a goddess like Isis who had equal status with male gods of her period.

#### C. Demeter (Roman Ceres)

Zeus' sister Demeter bore him a child called Core (Roman Proserpina). Demeter was the priestess of the cornfield and in general of fertility. I) Her daughter was abducted by Hades which gave Demeter no end of grief until a compromise was eventually worked out with which she could have her daughter nine months of the year and Hades would have her the other three months during which she would reign as Queen with the title of Persephone. Robert Graves interprets the abduction of Core as referring "to the male usurpation of the female agricultural mysteries in primitive times."<sup>12</sup> In any event, Demeter was prayed to for a good crop and seemed to control the specific fertility of a yield each year.

One interesting difference between Demeter and Athena is that Demeter produced several children. In fact, she fell in love with one of her sons Plutus and they made love in a newly ploughed field. Zeus rewarded this amorous behavior by killing Plutus with a thunderbolt. Athena, on the other hand, refused all requests to marry. She remained a virgin and as some have claimed could stand even more strongly for the unconquerability of Athens.

The cult of Demeter spread to Italy. "The cult of the Hellenized Ceres was exclusively in the hands of women. Greek priestesses were brought from Naples or Veleia (Elea) to supervise the new cult. These priestesses were granted Roman citizenship and held positions of prestige. Myths and rites surrounding Demeter were attributed to Ceres."<sup>13</sup> She was the goddess of agriculture and distribution of grain. Her devotees were almost exclusively female.

#### D. Artemis (Roman Diana)

Another child of Zeus became the goddess of the animals. According to Graves: "One day, while she was still a three-year-old child, her father Zeus, on whose knee she was sitting, asked her what presents she would like. Artemis

answered at once: ! Pray give me eternal virginity; as many names as my brother Apollo; a bow and arrows like his; the office of bringing light; a saffron hunting tunic with a red hem reaching to my knees; sixty young ocean nymphs, all of the same age, as my maids of honour; twenty river nymphs from Amnisus in Crete, to take care of my buskins and feed my hounds when I am not out shooting; all the mountains in the world; and, lastly, any city you care to choose for me, but one will be enough, because I intend to live on mountain most of the time!"<sup>14</sup> Zeus was apparently delighted by her and granted her all these wishes. She is appropriately symbolized as a huntress with a stag. (J)

The interpretation of Artemis' request for virginity can be seen as the beginning of the active separation of the goddess from biological motherhood and its concomitant sexuality. It appears to be an active choice which elevates the goddess to a high position of respect in the eyes of man. However, this interpretation has been questioned by some feminist critics. Pomeroy argues for example that Artemis and Athena were considered as virgins because they never married. "Rather, a befits mother goddesses they had enjoyed many consorts. Their failure to marry, however, was misinterpreted as virginity by succeeding generations of men who connected loss of virginity only with conventional marriage. Either way, as mother goddess or as virgin, Artemis retains control over herself; her lack of permanent connection to a male figure in a monogamous relationship is the keystone of her independence."<sup>15</sup> The extraordinary statue of Diana of Ephesus with its several breasts and stags seem to enforce a sensual interpretation of the virginity. In fact, Artemis (Diana) became known as goddess of childbirth, and of sudden death. She seemed to share, without taking part in women's life's cycles. She attributes this herself to the fact that her mother Leto bore her without pain. It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions because the facts are so illusive.

#### E. Aphrodite (Venus)

Another daughter of Zeus is known for her absolute rejection of virginity. Aphrodite was the goddess of love who delighted in making love with all sorts of gods and mortals. Because she was married, this love making was for the most part adulterous. According to Graves who uses Hesiod and Nonnus as sources "The Fates assigned to Aphrodite one divine duty only, namely to make love; but one day, Athene catching her surreptitiously at work on a loom, complained that her own prerogatives had been infringed and threatened to abandon them altogether. Aphrodite apologized profusely, and has never done a hand's turn of work since."<sup>16</sup> The jealousy among the sisters was a common aspect of the

interrelations in Zeus' Olympian family. Zeus ruled with contradictory passions. In fact, at one point while angry at Aphrodite he decided to force her to fall in love with a mortal. When she did, and after Zeus heard the mortal Anchises, bragging about making love with Aphrodite, he sent another of his infamous thunderbolts to kill him. Aphrodite averted the thunderbolt just enough to save Anchises, but he was so weakened that he lost his appeal for her and she went on to someone else.

Symbolically, Aphrodite is the goddess of beauty.(K) She represents all that men love in the carnal female. Bullfinch claims: "The grandest female statue in the world is that of the Venus of Milo, so called from its discovery in 1820 on the island of Milos. It was carried thence to Paris, and now stands as the gem of the Louvre. It presents all the majesty and dignity of a goddess, the pose and face both exhibiting that repose which is the triumph of the sculptor's art."<sup>17</sup> Like Athena she was born of man. As we saw in the Theogony, she sprang forth from the foam of the blood of the genitals of Uranus in the sea.(K<sup>1</sup>) Although she was important to prostitutes, in general she has been a more important goddess to men.

#### F. Hestia (Roman Vesta)

This goddess, another member of the Olympian family is what we would call today the goddess of housewives. She was the goddess of the hearth. "The center of Greek life...was the domestic hearth, also regarded as a sacrificial altar; and Hestia, as its goddess, represented personal security and happiness, and the sacred duty of hospitality."<sup>18</sup> The story of why she chose virginity is the story of every woman who put herself and her needs aside for those of her family. As tradition explains it, she was being courted both by Apollo and Poseidon. She swore, by Zeus' head, to remain a virgin forever in order to keep peace in Olympus. Ironically, he rewarded this by allowing her to have the first victim of every public sacrifice.

It is perhaps through the perpetuation of the worship of Hestia in its Roman form with the introduction of the collection of priestesses known as Vestal virgins that we associate her. These women consecrated several years of their lives to the temple of Vesta in Rome. During this time they were supposed to keep the sacred fire burning. The order lasted approximately 1000 years, from 600 B.C. to 400 A.D. During this time there were some lapses in the virginal aspect of the priestess' vocation and at others this lapse was severely punished by being buried alive.<sup>19</sup> In general however, the Vestals had a relatively high standing



within Roman society and were able to write their own will, given certain privileges in travelling around the city, and given royal seats at public performances. The remnants of temples to the virgins remain in the area of the Roman Forum today.

#### G. Hera (Roman Juno)

Perhaps the most maligned goddess is the wife of Zeus (Roman Jupiter). (M) She is known for her jealous rages against the women whom Zeus takes on as his mistresses. She seemed to be driven by a desire for revenge. One such mistress, Io, whom Zeus(Jupiter) had turned into a heifer to hide her from Hera was discovered. Hera tortured her by sending a gadfly and Io did not return to her original state until Zeus agreed to give her up. Another mistress, Callistro, was changed by Hera into a bear, but Zeus got even by elevating her to the constellation of stars called 'the big bear'. Although Zeus and Hera were equal in their power to give prophecy to any mortal, in most other things Zeus remained dominant. A careful look at their own courtship gives a clue to the later relationship.

Zeus, who was Hera's half brother, first tried to win her but failed. He then disguised himself as a pathetic bird called the cuckoo. She felt sorry for the bird and held it to her breast to warm it. Then he resumed his shape as a man and raped her. Hera was then shamed into marrying Zeus. The God's of Olympus began their reign with a rape. It was through her warmheartedness that Hera was overcome. Her later goddess personality seems to be based on classic insecurity and revenge. If she is not to be loved then at least she wants first place among the goddesses. Graves interprets the rape as the overthrow of goddess worship. "Hera's name, usually taken to be a Greek word for 'lady' may represent an original Herwa ('Protectoress'). She is the pre-Hellenic Great Goddess. ... Hera's forced marriage to Zeus commemorates conquests of Crete and Mycenaean---that is to say Cretanized---Greece, and the overthrow of her supremacy in both countries. He probably came to her disguised as a bedraggled cuckoo, in the sense that certain Hellenes who came to Crete as fugitives accepted employment in the royal guard, made a palace conspiracy and seized the kingdom."<sup>20</sup> Whether or not we can accept Grave's interpretation it is clear that the goddesses in Greece and Rome were not equal to the central male God. Something had changed from earlier times when the goddess seemed to be supreme.

The one story of insurrection we have is that Hera led a conspiracy against Zeus when his pride became unbearable. All the Olympians except Hestia tied him

up while he was sleeping. They hid his thunderbolt. However, he was rescued by Thetis who wanted to avert a civil war. Hera was then tied up and hung from the sky with a golden bracelet by each wrist and an anvil tied to each ankle. No one tried to help her. Finally Zeus freed her when each one promised never to rebel against him again. The dominance of the male God was complete. J.S. Mill reflected later on that women are denied a natural power, they will resort to intrigue. "To allow to any human beings no existence of their own but what depends on others, is giving far too high a premium on bending others to their purposes."<sup>22</sup> Hera is a classic example of this insight. For an indepth study of this particular goddess, Philip Slater's The Glory of Hera is crucial.

#### H. Apollo and Dionysus (Roman Bacchus)

Zeus fathered many children. Athena's mother was the Titaness Metis, Core's mother was Demeter, Dionysus' mother was Semele, and Artemis and Apollo were children of Leto. Little wonder that Hera was jealous. Her own children did not become the greater gods and goddesses of Olympus. She tricked Dionysus' mother into committing suicide and sent Dionysus out to fend for himself. He was killed, but was rescued by his grandmother Rhea and came to life again. She managed to have him brought up disguised as a girl. This has resulted in his being depicted as a very effeminate god.(N) Later on Hera recognized him as Zeus' son and drove him mad. He wandered throughout the world, trying to spread his own cult which centered around the use of wine. His exploits were violent, cruel and filled with ecstasy around perverse murders. Finally, he won acceptance and ascended to the Olympian heaven where Hestia, as befits her housewifely generosity, gave him her place.

Apollo is perhaps best known for the Oracle of Delphi which prophesied in his temple. It told Socrates that he was the wisest person on earth. The oracles were always given by women. Apollo also was involved in violent acts especially when someone endangered his pride. In a music competition he flayed his competitor alive and nailed his skin to a pine tree after winning the competition in the first place. He seems to have been transformed later on when he accepted a punishment of Zeus for a misdeed of his son. He had to serve one year of hard labor. Graves describes the results of this work as follows: "Having learned his lesson, he thereafter preached moderation in all things: the phrases 'Know thyself!' and 'Nothing in excess!' were always on his lips."<sup>23</sup>(0)

Apollo and Dionysus are significant to women's history because of the influence they had on the later development of ideas of masculinity and femininity.

Apollo came to represent reason and calm reflection which were taken to be masculine qualities while Dionysus came to represent passion, emotionalism, and the sheer energy of unrefined feminine nature. Nietzsche is the philosopher who expressed this duality most succinctly in his work The Birth of Tragedy. He states: "The continuous development of art is bound up with the Apollonian and Dionysian duality---just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodic intervening reconciliations."<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche further believed that the western world had become weakened by its neglect of the Dionysian side of human nature. Beginning with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle too much value was given to reason and reflection and not enough to the energy of passion. He felt that only with a reawakening of the Dionysian will the world be saved. His attacks on women's liberation were an attempt to keep women Dionysian in the full sense and not to let them become men and thereby adopt the Apollonian values. He states: "May I venture the surmise that I know women? That is part of my Dionysian dowry. Who knows? Perhaps I am the first psychologist of the eternally feminine."<sup>25</sup> It is unfortunate that Nietzsche had to choose Dionysus to represent the feminine. This choice was no doubt due to the effeminate representation of the god. However, if the female goddesses had not been progressively devalued, it would have been possible to choose other models for women's identity. The devaluation of the feminine is a topic that we will turn to in more detail later on.

At this point it may well be asked what is the value for contemporary women's studies in examining the long history of goddess worship. The first, and perhaps most obvious, response to this demand is that the study itself brings to light certain facts in women's history which have been neglected. Knowledge especially of the Greek and Roman deities can increase one's comprehension of art and literature which in certain periods made extensive use of symbols relating to the gods and goddesses. It can also awaken a sense of pride in the past in women who have been brought up almost completely within a religious framework in which there is little mention of female aspects to the divine. There are two further areas which are interesting as well. Some contemporary psychologists are using the goddesses as images which are helpful in therapeutic situations. Philip Zabriskie in "Goddesses in Our Midst", states: "I have found the Greek Goddesses vivid and stirring, indeed present. And collectively the western psyche, at least that of western whites, is closer to the Greeks than to any other culture which grew out of matriarchal soil. It may be that we can still make psychic contact with the Greek goddesses, that



they whose images were distilled by Greek imagination can still be for us varies, powerful images of the archetypal feminine and of how it---or She---may be manifest in our midst."<sup>26</sup> As a jungian psychologist Zabriskie is interested in seeing how the archetypes may be used to understand how couples function within a context of marriage and the family. A still further development is found in a new aspect of the women's movement in those feminists who are seeking to create a new religion. Carol Christ describes some of the aspects of the rediscovery of the goddess as follows: "Three meanings attach to the symbol of Goddess for these women: (1) the Goddess as divine female, as personification who can be invoked in prayer and ritual; (2) the Goddess as symbol of the life, death, and rebirth energy in nature and culture, in personal and communal life; (3) the Goddess as symbol of the affirmation of the legitimacy and beauty of female power (made possible by the new becoming of women in the women's liberation movement). She has been involved along with other women in the actual worship of the goddess. This takes the forms of the creation of small groups or covens. Some covens are all female, and some are mixed male and female. They usually meet outdoors on a mountain and the rituals include an invocation to the goddess to return to the earth as well as celebration of life festivals. According to Starhawk, one of the members of the craft of Wicca (or wise woman), "The Craft is earth religion, and our basic orientation is to the earth, to life, to nature. There is not dichotomy between spirit and flesh, not split between Godhead and the world. The Goddess is manifest in the world; She brings life into being, is nature, is flesh. Union is not sought outside the world in some heavenly sphere or through dissolution of the self into the void beyond the senses. Spiritual union is found in life, within nature, passion, sensuality---through being fully human, fully one's Self."<sup>28</sup> Following the division between Apollo as God of the sun and Artemis as goddess of the moon, they use the moon as their primary symbol for the goddess. The waxing and waning of the moon ties in with the rhythms of women's menstrual cycles as well as with the three stages of women's lives: the maiden, the mother, and the old prophetess.

Goddess worship differs fundamentally from Christianity first in the question of whether God is male or female. Second, while the Christian God is revealed in a specific person, Christ, the goddess seems to have no particular manifestation but appears in all sorts of forms. Third, while Christianity has always placed a high priority on virginity and chastity for both women and men, goddess worship encourages sexual expression of love. We will now turn to Christianity to study the ways in which certain aspects of the goddess were contained through the roles and functions of Mary and mariology.

## Mary, The Blessed Virgin

### a. Who Was Mary?

As most scholars know there is relatively little exact information on Mary, the woman who is believed to be the mother of Christ by a miraculous conception. God, through the Holy Spirit is believed to have fathered the child. In a course on woman's identity, it is important to devote some serious effort to the study of Mary because she is, without doubt, the most powerful single image of woman in western history. Furthermore, her most recent image has gone the way of most devalued female images. She is seen, for the most part, to be a passive young girl kneeling gently over a cradle. This particular image, perpetuated by Christmas cards, has been effective in convincing most women that Mary symbolizes passive motherhood.

Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher recognized another side of Mary. In Fear and Trembling a study of Abraham and Isaac he says: "To be sure, Mary bore the child miraculously, but it came to pass with her after the manner of women, and that season is one of dread, distress, and paradox."<sup>29</sup>

In order then, to uncover and identify with this deeper aspect of Mary we will now look at certain events, as described in the New Testament and reflect on what could be called the 'dread' of Mary. In assuming this approach, we will overlook the scholarly controversies surrounding the various biblical narratives and the connection they have with the Old Testament prophecies. For an in depth account of some of these, Alone of Her Sex by Marina Warner is helpful.

The first thing we can note is that in contrast to the forced abduction of women by Greek and Roman Gods, Jahweh asked Mary if she was willing to bear his child. He even used an intermediary, the angel Gabriel. Mary was frightened by the presence of the angel, but after listening to him she answered "Let what you have said be done to me." (Luke 1:38) Her first moment of dread could have come after the conception when Mary realized the possible consequences of her acceptance. She was engaged to Joseph, but not yet married. If she were found to be pregnant, it would be punishable by stoning to death. And indeed we are told that Joseph, when he finally discovered her pregnancy, decided only to put her quietly away. "Her husband Joseph, being a man of honor and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally." (Mat. 1:19-20) It is important to consider, however, that Mary did not know how Joseph would act for several months. He made his decision only after he had seen pregnancy which would have

been in the sixth or seventh month. She not only carried this fear all that time, but she kept it to herself. Most of us would have run to our neighbor, sister, mother, or fiancée if something of this magnitude had been asked of us! This kind of extraordinary self-containment is hardly consistent with a devalued image of her.

Mary did have one confirmation of the divinity of the conception during this time. She went to see her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant with John the Baptist. Elizabeth upon seeing Mary exclaimed: "Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord?" (Luke 1:44) God had revealed the secret to Elizabeth as He would to Joseph later on. Mary then responded with what has since been called "The Magnificat" a powerful poem which exalts the Lord and claims among other things that He will rout the proud of heart, pull down princes from their thrones, and exalt the lowly. (Luke 1:46-53) This poem is still sung at vespers in monasteries everyday. It is important once again to consider the power present in this response and to recognize its association with Mary. Through it she can be called one of the forerunners of contemporary liberation theology.

Joseph was finally notified in a dream that Mary had not committed adultery through breaking her engagement commitments, and he married her. Remembering that she is visibly pregnant by this time we can feel the personal dread she must have felt in having a wedding in this condition. As Kierkegaard further says: "The angel came only to Mary, and no one could understand her. After all, what woman was so mortified as Mary?"<sup>30</sup> To make difficult matters even worse, Joseph had to leave with her to make a trip of several days towards the end of her last month of pregnancy. He had to travel to the home of his family to comply with the orders of a census decreed by Ceasar Augustus. Again, if we try to think ourselves into Mary's situation we can see the anxiety which such a trip might create. It is difficult for most of us to be more than 15 minutes drive from the hospital especially for the birth of a first child. The prospect of a long trip on the back of a donkey is practically unthinkable.

In any event, we are told that the birth of the child was accompanied by various supernatural signs, a bright star, angels, shephards, and kings bearing gifts. Soon afterwards, Mary and Joseph presented their child in the temple. Jesus' importance was recognized by the prophetess Anna and the prophet Simeon. In addition, Mary was told: "A sword will pierce your own soul too---so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare." (Luke: 2:35) This is the first mention that she had a specific mission other than being the biological mother of the savior. Her soul was to be pierced, opened, so that in some way people's



innermost thoughts may come to light. Her function as counsellor and comforter derives from her experience not only of grace, but of dread.

Soon afterwards she received a bitter blow. Herod was jealous when he heard that a king had been born and he was determined to kill it. Joseph was warned in a dream to escape to Egypt. "Herod was furious when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, and in Bethlehem and its surrounding district he had all the male children killed who were two years old or under." (Matt 2:16) This story of the 'massacre of the Innocents' is to me the most horrifying experience of dread in Mary's life. Just imagine knowing that your child is the cause of the death of hundreds or even thousands of children. Even the loss of your own child as an adult could not compare with the massacre of innocent children. The passive image of Mary on Christmas cards often leaves out the dread.

We know nothing of her years of mothering of a young child except for one incident in which Christ stayed behind in Jerusalem when they thought he was with their caravan. It took them three days to find their twelve year old son. Again, if we think ourselves into this situation we know how much anxiety we feel just to hear about the kidnap of a child for one day. When this distress is continued for three days it is not surprising that Mary is described as being 'overcome' at finding Christ teaching the elders in the temple. She asked him: "My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you." (Luke 2:48-9) When Jesus answered that he was only doing his Father's work we are told that Mary "stored all these things in her heart." (Luke 2:52) Her capacity to ponder, or store, or hold thoughts in her heart is one of the great strengths of her character. She did not run to the telephone to discuss her latest problem in child rearing.

We are told that three more significant events in Mary's life at least in terms of the dynamics of dread which is the focus of this particular discussion. Before these events occur, however, we discover that Joseph is dead and Mary is a widow. We do not know when Mary became a single parent, but this experience too she lived. The first major event is connected with her role in Christ's first public miracle. At the wedding of Cana she knew before Jesus what was to happen. "The mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." Jesus said, "Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:3-6) Jesus then performed the miracle of turning water into wine. She would have experience dread both through her foreknowledge and through the shock of seeing the miracle itself happen.

The second major event is the crucifixion itself. We are told that she watched it. She was even close enough to speak with Christ just before he died. To be a witness to your only son's torture and violent death is a dreadful fate and the complexity of this aspect of Mary's vocation is well known.

The third major event is associated with Pentacost and with the general inclusion of Mary in the community of prayer. It is important to keep in mind that before Christ a woman was not allowed to count as a person capable of forming the ten persons needed for official prayer. However, Christ had said that wherever two or three persons are together that he would be in their midst. We are told that after the crucifixion "All of these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus." (Acts 1:14) The actual moment of Pentacost must also have been full of dread in that the holy spirit appears to have entered forcefully into the midst of the community with a loud noise like a powerful wind and pouring out what looked like the tongues of fire on each person's head. At least Mary's dread would have been shared this time.

After the above interpretative description of the dread of Mary it is easy to see that her greatness as an image and model for women was drawn not from the fact that she did not suffer or experience distress. Rather her greatness came from her transcendence of dread. It was only because a sword pierced her soul that she then became a possible source of comfort to the masses of humanity who share similar experiences of suffering. It is because of her devaluation and transformation into a weak, passive young girl in the modern imagination that she has lost this power. It is important, however, in studying women's history to uncover the basis for why Mary, later known as the Blessed Virgin was able to function so dominantly in people's religious and consciousness and every day lives. The above introductory sketch of the dread of Mary is a small attempt to redress the balance.

It is also important to reiterate that the methodology of the above interpretation does not take into account the extensive controversies about the sources of biblical texts. A good introductory course on the Bible in a department of Religion would be able to do this for those who are interested. My goal was merely to begin with the premise that the events described in the different gospels could be put together into a single story which in turn could provide the basis for a reflection on the significance of Mary as a model for women in the western world. The question of what significance Mary will for any particular person is an individual choice of religious faith.

b. What is Mariology?

In Western history, Mary grew to have much more significance than the Biblical story might have led one to expect. At various times she functioned as mother, queen, mediator, prophet, symbol of the church, and supreme model of the consecrated life. Her influence developed in two separate, but interrelated areas: in Church theology and in popular devotions. Two contemporary feminist studies of these areas are: "Mistress of Heaven: The meaning of Mariology" in Rosemary Ruether's New Woman New Earth and Alone of All Her Sex (The Myth and The Cult of the Virgin Mary) by Marina Warner. For an indepth study, classic works by Rahner, Montefort and Papal Encyclicals should be examined as well.

1. Church Proclamations:

431 A.D.	Mary, Mother of God (Theotokos) - Council of Ephesus
533 A.D.	Perpetual Virginity, Fifth General Council
1854 A.D.	Immaculate Conception, Pius IX
1950 A.D.	Assumption of Mary into Heaven, Pius XII

The striking thing about the slow development of church proclamations about Mary is the progressive purification which they indicate. Mary has become more independent and pure through the centuries. She becomes the model for the perfect woman. With her proclamation as Mother of God she gained an independence equal to Isis in the Egyptian imagination. The emergence of this symbol is discussed by Gertrude Schiller "The Hieractic image of the Theotokos (Mother of God) originated in the sphere of eastern art at the end of the fifth century. It appeared as a solitary figure and was inserted into scenes or made to form the principal figure at the centre of cycles. Mary had had until that time no independent significance in art."<sup>31</sup> Rosemary Ruether reinforces this claim: "The title Theotokos represents an opening for the development of popular devotion to Mary as a substitute mother goddess."<sup>32</sup>

The discussions and decisions surrounding Mary's virginity corresponded with the progressive dominance of monasticism and the view that the chaste life was a better life than the married state. Her virginity at the conception of Christ as accepted to show that Christ, having God as father was fully divine and having Mary as mother was fully human. However, the decision that she remained a virgin during the birth and afterwards indicates the growing need of Christian theologians to identify perfection with the rejection of sexuality. As Warner notes, virginity and power have long been associated. "The idea that virginity confers power operates on two different planes. First, the Fathers of the Church taught that the virginal



life reduced the special penalties of the Fall in women and was therefore holy. Second, the image of the virgin body was the supreme image of wholeness, and wholeness was equated with holiness."<sup>33</sup> Women became polarized theologically into two groups: the daughters of Eve and the daughters of Mary. Those who followed Mary overcame the consequence of the state of original sin by renouncing their sexuality and therefore, to some extent, their femininity.

In the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception the polarity between Mary and Eve became absolute. The popular belief is based upon the prophecy in the book of Genesis that the woman will crush the serpent under her heel (Gen 3:15). Through Mary evil will be destroyed. The theology which grew up around this is that Mary was born without original sin. This does not mean that Mary was conceived without intercourse of her parents. Anna and Joachim brought about her conception in the natural way. The Immaculate Conception means that Mary was born in a state of perfect grace. She never sinned; that is she never gave in to evil. In the iconography of this symbol Mary appears alone, without Christ, and often with the images described in the book of Revelations "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with the twelve stars on her head for a crown. She was pregnant, and in labor, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. (Rev 12:1) In the view of our preceding discussion of witchcraft and the association of women with evil in the 12-19th centuries, it is not surprising that the Immaculate conception emerged as a definitive conquering of evil through a woman in 1854. This woman, the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God succeeded where millions of others have failed.

The final official proclamation, the Assumption of Mary into heaven is a logical consequence of her Immaculate Conception. Since death and corruption of the body as a punishment of God given to Eve and Adam in the garden of Eden, it follows that anyone exempted from this punishment would not need to die and be raised up with a new body. Mary's body was perfect and therefore could be taken up to heaven as it is. She and Christ are the only two mortals to have this blessed state. Many commentators have seen the assumption of Mary as the sign of a readiness to incorporate the feminine into the godhead. It should be stated however, that Christianity has categorically denied the equality of the feminine with the masculine godhead. The Lord is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Mary is mediatrix between God and creator. She is also often called co-redemptrix. She helps in the redemption of the world. However, she is not considered to be equal to God in any way. At least insofar as correct Church theology is concerned. It is important to note, however, that in popular devotions she has functioned very much as a goddess. People pray to her, they love her, they serve her, and

they would give their lives to further her devotion. We will now turn to view some of these.

2. Mysteries of the Rosary:

Joyous mysteries (white roses)

1. annunciation
2. visitation
3. birth of Christ
4. presentation in the temple
5. recovery of Christ

Sorrowful mysteries (red roses)

6. agony in the garden
7. scourging at the pillar
8. crown of thorns
9. carrying the cross
10. crucifixion

Glorious mysteries (yellow roses)

11. resurrection
12. ascension
13. coming of the Holy Spirit
14. assumption of Mary
15. crowning of Mary - Queen of Heaven

Each decade is prayed

1 Our Father  
10 Hail Mary's  
1 gloria

Five decades a day

Monday - Joyous  
Tuesday - Sorrowful  
Wednesday- Glorious  
Thursday - Joyous  
Friday - Sorrowful  
Saturday - Glorious  
Sunday in advent - Joyous  
Sunday in lent - Sorrowful  
Sunday rest of year - Glorious

The rosary became a popular form of prayer in the early 16th century. It is an interesting fact that the same man who had taken part in writing the *Maleus Malifarium*, the definitive work on the Church's position towards witchcraft, Jacob Sprenger, was also the man who formed the first lay confraternity devoted to the rosary in 1475. The polarization of women into those who choose evil and those who choose good with an accompanying sense of battle was clearly present here. Mary was and is prayed to through the rosary in order to accomplish the crushing of the serpent under her heel.

The rosary itself is a profoundly simply incorporation of the central mystery of Christianity: of birth, death, and resurrection. Through it one lives through the path of innocence in the joyous mysteries, of suffering in the sorrowful mysteries, and of the joy of overcoming suffering in the glorious mysteries. The symbols of a white rose, red rose, and yellow rose have become central to western art and iconography. This cycle is repeated twice weekly in the continuous prayer of the rosary that is still offered in monasteries, churches, and at religious shrines. Until recently in Quebec, it was also prayed in the home by families often as an after dinner ritual. The underlying assumption is that through Mary one is saved.

### 3. The Litany of the Blessed Virgin:

In the litany, the following titles are given to Mary. After each title is stated the faithful respond "Pray for us":

Holy Mary,	Virgin most prudent,
Holy Mother of God,	Virgin most venerable,
Holy Virgin of virgins,	Virgin most renowned,
Mother of Christ,	Virgin most powerful,
Mother of divine grace,	Virgin most merciful,
Mother most pure,	Virgin most faithful,
Mother most chaste,	Mirror of justice,
Mother inviolate,	Seat of wisdom,
Mother undefiled,	Cause of our joy,
Mother most amiable,	Spiritual vessel,
Mother most admirable,	Vessel of honour,
Mother of good counsel,	Singular vessel of devotion,
Mother of our Creator,	Mystical Rose,
Mother of our Saviour,	Tower of David,



Tower of Ivory,	Queen of patriarchs,
House of Gold,	Queen of prophets,
Arc of the Covenant,	Queen of apostles,
Gate of Heaven,	Queen of martyrs,
Morning Star,	Queen of Confessors,
Help of the sick,	Queen of Virgins,
Refuge of sinners,	Queen of all Saints,
Comforter of the afflicted,	Queen conceived without original sin,
Help of christians,	Queen of the Most Holy Rosary,
Queen of angels,	Queen of Peace

As with the Rosary the prayers to Mary in the Litany are surrounded, that is they are begun and end with prayers to Christ and the Father. However, even with this theologically correct structure, it is Mary that the prayers rise to. She is called 'Holy', 'Mother', 'Virgin', 'Mystical Rose', 'Morning Star' and 'Queen'. The Litany summarizes all the specific images that she presented through the centuries. The representation of Mary as Queen of Heaven was an extremely powerful image during the periods of western history when Kingship and Queenship were taken as divinely ordained. In a brilliant discussion of the way in which cathedrals in 12th century France got their inspiration from the Blessed Virgin as Queen Henry Adams describes the building of Chartres:

From her humble beginnings when the angel Gabriel asked her if she might mother a child, Mary had become Queen of a greater part of Europe.

##### 5. Apparitions and shrines:

Guadalupe	(1531)
La Salette	(1848)
Lourdes	(1858)
Fatima	(1917)
Garabandel	(1961-65)

At Guadalupe, Mexico, The Blessed Virgin gave a painting of herself to a peasant man in the mountains. At La Salette, France, she wept and gave a warning that God was about to punish the world, if it did not obey. In Lourdes, France, she proclaimed herself the Immaculate Conception and left a fountain of water

which is believed to bring about healing. In Fatima, Portugal, she gave a terrifying vision of hell to three children and caused the sun to dance for over 70,000 people. Finally, at Garabandel, Spain the virgin accompanied by The Archangel Michael gave an even stronger warning to the world to come back to God. She stated that if this reorientation did not come about, the some severe chastisement would occur. Her visit was not wholly a prophecy of violence for while there, she kissed many holy objects and initiated many healings.

The above shrines are the ones which have permanence in our own times. However, there have been many more which developed earlier and have either ceased to exist or else have more of a regional significance. A colleague from Concordia, Lionel Rothkrug has traced 1086 places of pilgrimage in Germany in pre-reformation 16th century. Of these approximately 500 were dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. In many of these shrines Mary was in her function as Queen of Heaven, The Suffering Mary, or the Beautiful Virgin. She blessed the hunt including the horses and she led men forth into battle. In her representation she appeared remarkably like Athena, a goddess of war. In one legend, she even appears disguised as a contender in a joust tournament. More recently, her image has been one of goddess of peace, at least on earth, although she still functions as goddess of battle against Satan and the powers of evil (witness the Blue Army of Fatima). Rothkrug's research has pointed out the importance of keeping in mind the tremendous regional and class variation in worship of the Blessed Virgin. For example: in Germany "since the First Crusade, which had been launched in her name, the Virgin continued to hold an exalted position among the aristocracy throughout the entire Middle Ages...Only in the last decade of the 15th century did The Virgin unite peasant and aristocrats on a regional scale, testifying to a solidarity in religious practice comparable to that prevailing in the cities."<sup>35</sup> In addition to class differentiation regional variety is seen for instance in the specific form that miracles of the virgin took. Outside of Germany in France, England and Bavaria, there occurred over several hundred miracles of the virgin beginning around 1095, that is the time of the First Crusade. Before that time all miracles were attributed to saints. They were chiefly local in character, as were the specific saints,

and concerned protection from an invader, protection of local property, or some other specific material good. The miracles of the virgin, on the other hand, were the first recorded miracles to concentrate on saving souls. She was not local in any way, and she also was concerned not only about the aristocracy, but helped everyone, strong, poor, criminals and prostitutes. It is interesting to note that miracles of the virgin did not come into Germany until the 1500's. The Virgin seemed to bring universality into the notion of miracles which previous exhortation to saints did not do. Her appearances at contemporary shrines continue this tradition. More recently people have been visiting her shrines in hopes of a miracle, especially of healing. Statistics seem to indicate that in 1971 over 500,000 pilgrims visited Lourdes, and in 1973 over a million visited Fatima.<sup>36</sup>

c. What is the significance of Mary today?

The first observation must be that Mary and Mariology has been used to reinforce the status quo and particularly to force women into roles of passivity and obedience towards a patriarchal hierarchy. Mary as model has crushed many a creative young girl when the model perpetuated consisted in the stereotyped virgin who always says 'Yes' to her superiors no matter what she might be feeling inside. Simone de Beauvoir expresses this as follows: "The virginity of Mary has above all a negative value; that through which the flesh has been redeemed is not carnal; it has not been touched or possessed... If Mary's status as spouse be denied her, it is for the purpose of exalting the Woman Mother more purely in her. But she will be glorified only in accepting the subordinate role assigned her. "I am the servant of the Lord." For the first time in human history the mother kneels before her son; she freely accepts her inferiority. This is the supreme masculine victory, consummated in the cult of the Virgin---it is the rehabilitation of woman through the accomplishment of her defeat."<sup>37</sup> Feminist theologians have correctly uncovered the other side of Mariology and its abuse in women's history.

Another aspect of the negative side of Mary in the lives of individual women is brought out by Mary Daly. "In the case of the ideal of goodness foisted upon women, however, there is a special aura of glorification of the ideal, as symbolized in Mary, for example. This impossible ideal ultimately has a punitive function, since of course, no woman can really live "up" to it. (Consider the impossibility of being both virgin and mother). It throws all women back into the status of Eve and essentially reinforces the universality of women's low caste status."<sup>38</sup> Daly decides that Mary (and Christ as well) no longer serve as useful models for women. She calls her self post-Christian and seeks new religious roots for women by studying



the transcendence in female religious consciousness. De Beauvoir, however, rejected all religious dimensions of women's identity as an escape from material reality.

It is a well known fact that women in Catholic countries, where Mary reigns supreme are in a worse socio-economic position than women in Protestant countries where the female and the divine have been totally severed. In addition access of women to the ministry has been denied in religions which have a strong basis in Mariology in contrast to those which do not. What is the connection between Mary's elevation and the devaluation of specific women, at least insofar as access to equal opportunities in work and law? There is no easy answer to this question. Several suggestions have been given. The most obvious one is that the elevation of Mary serves as a compensation for inequalities in the world. It is further compounded by the radical dualism engendered in a religion which claims that rewards for suffering and service come in the next world. In an interesting article entitled "Machisma and Marionismo", Evelyn Stevens analyzes the effect of Mariology on Latin American women. She discovered that most women did not want a change of the status quo. In pursuing the theme further she found, "Taking its cue from the worship of Mary, marionismo pictures its subjects as semi-divine, morally superior and spiritually stronger than men. The constellation of attributes enables women to bear the indignities inflicted on them by men, and to forgive those who bring them pain. Like Mary, women are seen as mediatrices without whose intercession men would have little chance to obtaining forgiveness for their transgressions. Conversely, a female cannot hope to attain full spiritual stature until her forbearance and abnegation have been tested by male-inflicted suffering. Men's wickedness is therefore the necessary precondition of women's superior status."<sup>39</sup>

Steven's insight is that this behavior of women reinforces the need for macho behavior in men. He in turn needs her to be saved. She summarizes this: "The more closely the husband conforms to stereotyped macho behavior the more rapidly his suffering wife advances towards her anticipated beatification."<sup>40</sup>

Rosemary Ruether has given the most careful analysis of this duality of power relationships in New Women New Earth. She does not reject religion and the search for transcendence but rather calls for a renewal of the basic principals inherent in this search. She states; "Mariology cannot be a liberating symbol for women as long as it preserves this meaning of "femininity" that is the complimentary underside of masculine domination. Mariology becomes a liberating symbol for women only when it is seen as a radical symbol of a new humanity freed from hierarchical power relations, including that of God and humanity. It is here that the revolutionary side of the image of Mary appears, as the representative of the original and escatological humanity that is repressed from existence within patriarchy, the

culture of domination and subjugation. Woman becomes the symbol of the unknown possibility of a humanity beyond and outside the entire system of such a world."<sup>41</sup> If one follows Ruether's analysis to the end it is clear that she, in abolishing all hierarchical relations, has stepped outside the Christian perspective that claims that people are created by a powerful God, redeemed by Christ, and called to a specific vocation within this process of religious recreation. Her use of the symbol of Mary is she claims 'a resurrection' of the old Mary. It certainly is transformed.

There are other options for contemporary women than those mentioned above of de Beauvoir, Daly, or Ruether. Traditional Christianity has also gone through a renewal and in some ways offers some interesting possibilities for women in terms of witness. Mother Theresa has founded an order whose white habit with a blue border symbolizing Mary's presence is seen in slums all over the world. She says: "How much we can learn from our Lady! She was so humble because she was all for God."<sup>42</sup> Her sisters live in the simplest surroundings taking on extremely difficult work. They take the traditional vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. Mother Theresa states further: "They want to give to God everything. They know very well that it's to Christ the hungry and Christ the naked and Christ the homeless that they are doing it. And this conviction that this love is what makes the giving a joy. And that's why you see the Sisters are very happy. They are not forced to be happy; they are naturally happy because they feel that they have found what they have looked for."<sup>43</sup>

Another example of Mary's presence in contemporary life is found in the example of the contemplative Benedictine Abbey in Bethlehem, Connecticut. Regina Laudis (Queen of Praise) has become a flourishing monastery which combines a traditional liturgy (Latin Gregorian chant) and Catholic theology with a radically modern vision of the capacity for women to create a dynamic physical, moral, and spiritual environment. They have recently founded a second monastery, Our Lady of the Rock an Island off the state of Washington. The nuns at Regina Laudis have become nearly totally self-sufficient, growing almost all their food, raising their own cattle, making their own butter, cheese and even ice cream. In addition to doing all this farm labor themselves, they have been able to help the creation of at least ten different lay communities focusing around a specific function such as teaching, law, organic farming, works of mercy, and so forth. The nuns act as spiritual directors to the communities and its members, for the most part from behind the grill of a cloister although some are allowed to act outside the cloister. They encourage prospective nuns to have a profession before entering the monastery and to keep this profession up to date for the

benefit of the community. In both the case of Regina Laudis and of Mother Theresa's Sisters of Charity it is clear that Mary is not functioning as a passive model. On the contrary, she seems to be leading women to a fullness of being and to the living out of lives which use all their personal capacities, even if the traditional sacrifices of religious vows are a prerequisite.

The contemporary significance of Mary will be an individual choice for women and men. There is no question that she will continue to have a place (positive and negative) in the lives of women for many years to come. As Harvey Cox, theologian at Harvard Divinity School says: "If God is dead, Mary is alive and well."

### Virginity and Chastity(in individual women)

#### a. Social functions:

As we saw in the study of prostitution, Engels recognized the valuable social function in dividing women into two classes: wives and mistresses. Wives, by being virgins at the time of marriage and remaining free from adultery during the course of marriage, guaranteed the father line to be passed on unstained from father to son. The name and property went to children whose paternity could be guaranteed. Virginity was not only a sign of consecration to God, but it also served a valuable social end. Through protecting a daughter's virginity, her father could guarantee the possibility of creating valuable alliances with other families by marrying his daughter off to a particularly suitable suitor. The husband then continued by protecting his wife's 'honor' after marriage. The law aided in this process by developing severe punishment for adulterous females. It is no coincidence that the law for sexual liaison's of wives with men other than their husbands are much more severe than for husbands. At various times in history the law allowed killing of the wife, dismissing her, sending her to a monastery, depriving her of a significant proportion of her property, etc. For several examples of these laws, Not in God's Image an anthology of women's history by O'Faolain and Martines contains much original source material.

When the additional fact is added that women were for the most part economically dependent upon their husbands, it is no wonder that virginity and chastity became coveted virtues. It was much more dangerous for a woman to risk the consequences of adultery than for a man. The good woman, like Mary lived a quiet life as wife and mother; while the bad woman, like Eve risked danger and even death to follow her pleasures and loves.

Many women did choose, however, to forsake marriage by joining a religious order. While the goal of their choice may not have been to avoid marriage, the result was that through the chastity many women did have a freedom and access to



education that they would otherwise have missed. This is as true in the second century when the monastic movement had its beginnings as it was in early Quebec history. It is helpful to look a moment at some specific examples of this social fact. Between the years of 1600 and 1800 in Quebec six different women chose six different ways of living out an independent life. There were, of course, many more, but these six stand out for the uniqueness of their choices and for the intensity with which they lived them.

Mary of the Incarnation(1599-1672): after becoming a widow in France and running her family business, left her son at age 11 to found the Ursuline's convent in Quebec City. In a letter written to her son at a much later date she tells him about her decision not to have given him to members of the French aristocracy to raise. "But the thought that came to me then was that if you were advanced in the world your soul would be in danger of being lost. And, as well, the former thoughts that had made me desire only poverty of spirit as a heritage for you and me made me resolve to leave you for a second time in the hands of the Mother of Goodness, trusting that, since I was going to risk my life in the service of her Son, she would take care of you."<sup>44</sup> Her correspondence is an invaluable source of information about life in New France for she became an important force in the fabric of this new society.

Jeanne Mance(1609-1642): helped settle Montreal with de Maisonneuve. The original name of Montreal was Ville Marie (City of Mary). In one rather dramatic description of Jeanne Mance we are told: "To her belongs the single honor of being the first of those brave women who helped build up our home and make our history. In the bloom of early womanhood, fearless, firm, efficient, upheld by divine grace, urged on by apostolic zeal, she came with scarcely a female companion into a wilderness swarming with pitiless savages, covered with trackless forests, exposed to dangers of every kind, abounding in toil, privation and hardship. After de Maisonneuve, she was the leading spirit."<sup>44</sup> Jeanne Mance had no interest in forming or joining a religious order, but preferred to remain as a lay person living a more private life. She began one of the main hospitals in Montreal ---l'hotel Dieu---and governed it for 31 years. Part of her work also consisted in ordering all the provisions needed from France for the long winters. She made the return voyage three times. Any written description of these voyages across the Atlantic are enough to convince one of the incredible fortitude and courage of early settlers.

Marguerite Bourgeoys(1620-1670): came to Montreal to found the first schools. On the boat over she insisted on giving up her place at the captain's table and slept outside on a pile of coiled rope to indicate her love of sharing all the hardships with the crew. Her devotion to the Blessed Virgin was pronounced. She

built the first chapel in Montreal in her name---Notre Dame de Bonsecours. "The wish grew within Margaret's heart to glorify God and honour the Blessed Lady by building a chapel in which she would gather together the young girls of Ville Marie and instil in their lives a deep and practical devotion to the Blessed Virgin."<sup>44</sup> What is most striking about Marguerite Bourgeoy's life is its extreme independence. From its beginnings in France where she travelled alone to the shipyard with just a bundle of clothes to Montreal where she insisted on climbing the mountain to rebuild the cross which the Indians had destroyed, she led a life of individual leadership for the benefit of the larger community. Her dedication to the Blessed Virgin took many forms---none of them connected with passivity. In addition to constructing the Chapel of Notre Dame de Bonsecours, and having the mountain of Montreal placed under the protection of Marie des Neiges (Mary of the Snow), she founded the Congregation Notre Dame (Congregation of Our Lady) whose function it was to teach the children of Montreal. She refused to allow the order to be cloistered as were all French religious orders of the time. She maintained that women had to be able to go out into the streets and into the homes of families in Montreal if they would be able to teach effectively.

Katiri Tekakwitha(1656-1680): Was a Mohawk Indian from central New York State who had an ardent desire to live a life of chastity. She refused to marry and had to escape from her home. She made her way north ending up in Montreal where she lived a life of extreme austerity. She made a solemn vow of chastity on The Feast of the Blessed Virgin, 1669. According to her spiritual director Cholenec: "She gave me no peace till I had granted her permission to make the same sacrifice of herself, not by a simple resolution to guard her virginity, such as she had already made, but by an irrevocable engagement which obliged her to belong to God without any recall."<sup>44</sup> Katiri lived on her own, as a lay person, until her death at an early age. She refused to join an order and thereby be forced to become 'Europeanized'. She preferred to continue living the outdoor life of the Indian people. Her grave has become the center for many pilgrimages and today is venerated in the midst of the Caughanawaga Indian reservation.

Jeanne LeBer(1662-1714): was the daughter of one of the wealthiest families in Montreal. Jeanne Mance was her godmother and she was educated in Marguerite Bourgeoy's school. She refused to marry and became a recluse, again without being the specific member of a religious order. Later on, she gave a large sum of money to the Congregation of Notre Dame to build a church on the condition that they built her a three story tiny cell (10-12) adjoined to the church. She became a total recluse never leaving the cell for 20 years. Her intercession is attributed with saving Montreal from being conquered by the English in 1711. The Baron de Longueuil took a banner to fight with the English at Chambly. According to tradi-

tion "Jeanne herself made the banner. On one side was a picture of the Immaculate Conception, painted by her brother, and on the opposite side was traced the following inscription: "Our enemies rely on the power of their arms, and we on the powerful intercession of her whom we revere and invoke as the Queen of Angels. She is as terrible as an army in battle array. She will help us to vanquish our enemies."<sup>45</sup>

Marguerite D'Youville(1701-1772): is the first Canandian born woman in Quebec to become famous for her work. She had given birth to six children, two of whom survived. Her husband who made his living by trading liquor with the Indians died young leaving her with many debts to pay. She decided to consecrate herself to the care of the poor and began her work by taking an old blind woman into her home. "It was on November 2, 1737, the feast of the Presentation of The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple, that Madam d'Youville gently guided Francoise Osseau up the steps of her home in the Market Place."<sup>44v</sup> Together with a few other women she earned a living by sewing articles ranging from tents to the most elegant gowns for Montreal aristocracy. She eventually founded an order and ran a hospital for the elderly, for orphans, and for French, English and Indian soldiers. Her extraordinary openness to all of the sides of the conflict led to her later being called by Pope John XXIII 'Mother of Universal Charity'. Of the many incidents in her life, two stand out as examples of her sense of honour and courage. First, the title of her order 'Grey Nuns' was chosen because her women had been called 'les soeurs grises'---meaning 'the drunken sisters' because of Monsieur d'Youville's work in alcohol trading. In fact they had been refused communion one day at the Cathedral of Notre Dame because the priest believed the rumors of their drunkenness. Marguerite d'Youville used the same phrase and changed its signficiance to 'gris' meaning 'grey' and chose a grey habit as her emblem. In another incident an English soldier burst in the doors of the hospital being pursued by an Indian with a tomohawk raised. Marguerite d'Youville rose quickly motioned to the soldier to hide under the tent. She then pointed her arm in another direction to the Indian. This same Englishman (John Southworth) later on, saved the hospital from being bombbarded by General Amherst in his take-over of Montreal.

All of the above six women lived lives of full development, each in a very different way from the other. Ranging from teaching, nursing, contempoative eremical prayer, to political bargaining and individual witness their chastity allowed them the full freedom of personal expression. In many of the examples, The Blessed Virgin, played a significant role in the development of their vocation. She functioned as Virgin, as protector, as Mother of Goodness, as teacher, and as nurse and comforter.



Another tradition of chastity developed in Northern Germany under the name of Beguines communities. Noble women, many of whom were widows joined these communities which allowed them to live independent lives without taking traditional religious vows. They did much charitable work. In order to earn a living they turned often to sewing. Eventually the spinning wheel became their symbol. This is the reason why the word 'spinster' today signifies 'unmarried woman over a certain age'.<sup>46</sup>

It is obvious that many women in the 18th and 19th centuries choose not to marry in order to have a career. Nietzsche ironically describes this choice:

"The literary woman, unsatisfied, agitated, desolate in heart and entrails, listening every minute with painful curiosity to the imperative which whispers from the depths of her organism 'aut liberi aut libri' (either children or books)."<sup>47</sup>

The reasons for this are clear: child bearing also involves child rearing. To be free to have an independent career meant to be free from having children. Chastity seemed an obvious way out of the dilemma, especially when women began to be able to earn their own living through writing or other artistic pursuits. It is only recently that women are trying to combine both a career and family.

b. Psychological effects:

One of the psychological effects of the connection of virginity and chastity with women's identity is what has come to be called 'the double standard' sexual morality. Until recently girls were rewarded for being sexually innocent as long as possible. They were told that it was up to them to say 'when to stop' when on a date as boys 'will try to get as much as they can'. A girl always had the brakes on. Betty Friedan talks about the difficulties this produces for women later on when they are expected to be just the opposite. (48)

Frigidity is one psychological effect of the abuse of the virgin model for women's identity.

Another consequence is the inverse sexual morality which we find experiencing at the present time. In this absolute rejection of the previous Mary-Eve polarity women are claiming that Eve is good and Mary is bad. Sexual freedom is thought to

be wonderful for everyone and the new goal of total sexual liberation is held up to one and all. One interesting symbolic indication of this inversion is the creation of the fad of jewelery which is designed around a half eaten apple. This implication is that Eve ate the apple and gave it to Adam. Adam is delighted and buys the daughter of Eve a piece of jewelry to remember the event by. We will deal with women's sexuality in much more detail in the section on woman as Passive Object. At this point, however, we will study the application of the polarity between the Virgin Goddess and Evil Temptress in one institutional problem facing women today: the problem of rape.

### Rape

de Beauvoir in The Second Sex comments about a woman's first experience with sex as follows: "It is not uncommon for the young girl's first experience to be a real rape and for the man to act in an odiously brutal manner; in the country and wherever manners are rough, it often happens that--half consenting, half revolted ---the young peasant girl loses her virginity in some ditch, in shame and fear."<sup>49</sup> In one of the path-breaking articles on the subject written in 1971 "Rape: The All-American Crime", Susan Griffen shows that the experience described above may be much further reaching than supposed at first glance. "The Federal Bureau of Investigation classes three crimes as violent: murder, aggravated assault and forcible rape. In 1968, 31,060 rapes were reported. According to F.B.I. and independent criminologists, however, to approach accuracy, this figure must be multiplied by at least a factor of ten to compensate for the fact that most rapes are not reported; when these compensatory mathematics are used, there are more rapes committed than aggravated assaults and homicides."<sup>50</sup> It has taken the contemporary feminist movement to begin a badly needed, careful analysis of rape. Until now there has been no attempt to ask and answer 'Why?' to such a common act of violence. Analysis has focused on three areas: the history of rape, rape and the law, contemporary possibilities for action.

#### a. The history of rape:

As stated previously, western history is based upon the two sources of Greek and Hebrew thought. We discussed previously, the commonplace rape by Zeus (Jupiter) of goddesses and mortals he desired. The Bible also has its tales to tell. "Dinah, who was Jacob's daughter by Leah went out to visit the women of that region. Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, who was ruler of that region, saw her, carried her off and raped her, and so dishonored her." (Gen:34:1-2) He fell in love with her

and requested to marry her. He was tricked by her brothers who killed all the men in Shechem's village. "They carried off all their riches, all their little children, and their wives, and looted everything to be found in their houses." (Gen 34:29) Rape seemed to justify rape and on the cycle went. Jacob, who was very distressed by this massacre chastised his sons. They answered: "Is our sister to be treated like a whore?" (Gen 34:31) The woman at this point already is devalued by an act that she had no control over. As we shall see, rape is now understood as primarily an act of violence against property, the property of males. If Dinah is treated like a prostitute, she has no property value. It is particularly evident in this case because the man who had raped her was the son of a king, a man with enormous prestige in the area. Jacob saw the possibility of an alliance which his sons rejected. He then was forced to move. Dinah's father saw the worth of her property value in cementing an alliance with the Hivites; while her brothers saw the loss of her property value within the Hebrew family.

Perhaps the most horrifying Biblical story of rape is found in the Book of Judges. A man had invited a stranger to come into his home for the evening. Hoodlums from the town asked him to give the stranger to them for an evening of homosexual abuse. He refused saying: "No, my brothers; I implore you, do not commit this crime. This man has become my guest; do not commit such an infamy. Here is my daughter, she is a virgin; I will give her to you. Possess her, do what you please with her, but do not commit such an infamy against the man." (Judges 19:25) One might wonder how loving such a father would be. The men refused the daughter, however, and the guest was reduced to sending out his own concubine. She was raped. We are told "At daybreak the girl came and fell on the threshold of her husband's host, and she stayed there till it was full day. In the morning her husband got up and opened the door of the house; he was coming out to continue his journey when he saw the woman who had been his concubine lying at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. He said to her, "Stand up; we must go." There was no answer. Then he laid her across his donkey and began the journey home. Having reached his house, he picked up his knife, took hold of his concubine, and limb by limb cut her into twelve pieces; then he sent her through the land of Israel." (Judges 19:26-30) The double symbol of the unnamed woman lying dead with her hands on the threshold and of being cut into pieces because of men's relations with men is a poignant image of the history of rape. Rape has been for centuries, a crime of men against other men through the bodies of women who belong to them as property. The virgin daughter could be given away by the father and the concubine by the husband. It is only recently that rape has developed as an act of violence against women per se.



The major work on the history of rape has been written by Susan Brownmiller and is called Against Our Will (Men, Women and Rape). In it she traces the phenomenal prevalence of rape throughout the following areas: general western European history, World War I, World War II, Bangladesh, Vietnam, The American Revolution, Pogroms, Mormon Persecutions, The KKK, The Congo, Indians, Slavery, Modern Gangs, Prisons, Polic Rape, and the Sexual Abuse of Children. She states: "Critical to our study is the recognition that rape has a history, and that through the tools of historical analysis we may learn what we need to know, about our current condition."<sup>51</sup> She provides a very thorough collection of information about what did take place and how it was described by the men involved in it. She finishes this monumental task with the statement "My purpose in this book has been to give rape its history. Now we must deny it a future."<sup>52</sup>

b. Rape and the Law:

Lorenne Clark and Debra Lewis have provided the first critical analysis of the relation between law and rape in Rape: The Price of Coercive Sexuality. This important work takes the insights of Brownmiller one step further. It shows definitively that the law and judicial system has developed with a consistent ideology over the centuries. This proof counters the claim that the court system does not work well in the case of conviction of rapists. In an article in Chatelaine (Sept. 1971) entitled "Nice Girls Don't Get Raped", Erna Paris states: "In 1969, the Toronto Police Department received 123 complaints of rape. Many were never charged; others were dropped at the preliminary inquiry or the Grand Jury level. In any event, fifteen people stood trial for rape in Ontario that year. Conviction rates for those who pleaded not guilty (three-quarters of the accused) are estimated to fall between eighteen and thirty percent."<sup>53</sup> Clark and Lewis decided to research why there was such an enormous fall out between the time of report of a rape and the conviction of the rapist. With the cooperation of the Toronto Police and a grant from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research fund, they researched all the cases processed in the year 1970. They discovered that the decisions had nothing to do with the rapist but rather with the class, living situation, and physical appearance of the rape victim. Cases which were classified as unfounded by the police involved a combination of factors, some of which included the appearance of the presence of alcohol, the lack of job skills, independent marital status, not living at home, and previous sexual experience. The tie-up with the polarity between woman as evil temptress and virgin goddess is astonishingly present. "From the earliest time to the present, virgins have been considered 'credible' rape victims, because the loss of virginity most drastically and obviously affects the social value women have

as desirable objects of exclusive sexual access. When a woman's value consists in her sexual and reproductive capacities, and when the object of marriage is to gain access to the exclusive use of a woman's sexuality, virginity is, of course, a woman's greatest treasure. Loss of virginity (or, if married, loss of one's status as an object of guaranteed, exclusive sexual access) markedly affects a woman's property value. This is why the law has always favored rape victims who are virgins under the ownership and protection of their fathers, or chaste wives under the ownership and protection of their husbands."<sup>54</sup> In other words, those women who resemble the virgin Mary will be considered 'credible' victims and have a good chance of their cases moving forward to conviction within the judicial system. Those women who resemble Eve will probably fall out along the way as 'unfounded' cases. It is important to understand the dynamic interplay of these structures of woman's identity even if a society in general does not hold the religious beliefs which they spring from. One of the reasons for the persistence for these concepts in legal systems is the association of woman with private property. Although we will deal more thoroughly with this notion in the next section on Woman as Earth Mother, Clark and Lewis' careful analysis of the relation between woman as private property of man and the history of rape is appropriate here.

"Rape is simply theft of sexual property under the ownership of someone other than the rapist. When women are forms of private property, owned by fathers or husbands, with a value determined by their sexual and reproductive capacities, rape is an act of theft and trespass against the legal owner of the sexual property (that is, the woman) in question. ...From the beginning, rape was perceived as an offence against property, not as an offence against the person on whom the act was perpetuated, and it has not lost the shrouds of these historical origins."<sup>55</sup> It is not a surprise then that women of the upperclasses, whose value as private property is considered higher than those of the lower classes, receive better treatment by the law and courts. Clark and Lewis have shown that the same philosophy which worked in early anglo-saxon law functions in the courtrooms today. The police are merely anticipating the results when they class a case of a lower class girl who is living independently with no specific job as 'unfounded'. They know that the courts will not be able to get a conviction.

### c. Contemporary Possibilities for Action:

The first thing that all feminists agree upon is the need for women and men to give up what has been called 'victimology' i.e., blaming the victim for rape. For centuries it was thought that when a woman got raped she 'caused' it. According to Clark and Lewis: "One of the most common misconceptions concerning rape



victims is that they are attractive women who dress in a "provocative", "suggesting", or "enticing" manner. We found no justification for this assumption in our own or other data."<sup>56</sup> In most cases women, the victims, were not at fault. However, there are certainly some suggestions that feminists are making about how to avoid, or get out of potentially dangerous situations. In Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women by New York Radical Feminists, various suggestions are given ranging from self defence tactics to vigilante groups whose purpose is to 'get the rapist'. Further research by feminists has indicated that women with multiple strategies for escape (4-5) seem to manage better than those with only one strategy. In all of these cases it is obvious that women are being asked to develop qualities which are not in the stereotype of the 'feminine'. That is they must actively consider how to protect themselves instead of expecting a male member of their immediate environment to do the protecting, i.e., father, brother, husband, son or boyfriend. There are also other more specific suggestions ranging from walking on the side of the road which is opposite the traffic flow to being aware that going to the home of an acquaintance and being raped there means that there is little chance of a court conviction against the rapist. Most convictions are aided by the fact that the rape was done in the victim's home.

The second thing that has been universally agreed upon by feminists is that the fantasy attributed to women: that they like being raped is a pure myth of men. Women may fantasize being seduced, but it is impossible for them to fantasize rape as pleasant because rape is precisely that which is against one's will. Coupled with this is the need for victims of rape to overcome the feelings of shame and guilt which they personally and society seems to project on them. This is a residue of the view that woman as a valuable piece of property has been rendered valueless by rape. Clark and Lewis feel that this situation will be aided by a change in the law which will remove rape from the category of sexual offenses and place it instead in the category of assault. People do not feel ashamed when beat up or robbed.

The third suggestion of feminists is that structural changes must take place to recognize women's emerging independence. Clark and Lewis state: "It is our fundamental belief that the problems of women in contemporary Canadian society do not come from simple malfunctions in our social and legal system, and cannot therefore be solved by simple solutions. Radical change is needed, and in our view, radical change is structural change."<sup>57</sup>

Specifically society must shake its residual view of woman as property and instead accept her as person in the fullest sense. "We must establish and firmly entrench the principle that sexual autonomy is as much a right of women as it is of men, and one which is included within that notion of the autonomy of persons



which is among our most fundamental legal and social principles. Like other forms of physical assault, rape must be defined and treated as an offence against the person, and not as an offence against property."<sup>58</sup>

Finally, women must recognize that rape is part of the structure of woman's identity. It affects all women. We are not able to be divided into those who have been and those who have not been. When one woman is raped, it should be a grief to all women. Certainly rape crises centers have been functioning within this framework of recognition and have developed a very supportive environment to help those who have undergone this violent act. But women must not exclude themselves from the responsibility of recognizing this problem as one that faces all of us.

"The fear of rape affects all women. It inhibits their actions and limits their freedom, influencing the way they dress, the hours they keep, and the routes they walk. The fear is well founded, because no woman is immune from rape."<sup>59</sup> The important point here is to bring a deeply hidden (nearly unconscious) fear out to the surfact of our thoughts so that we can adequately understand its roots and its solutions.

### Conclusion

In this section we have looked at the polarity between the virgin goddess and the evil temptress, goddess history, the function of Mary and Mariology within this context, courtly love, and the application of the virgin goddess to literature and in the history of rape. In a course, it may not be possible to deal with all of these subjects in a single year. Some should be selected and pursued in departments in one year and others in another year. In addition there are several other areas which could suitably fall under this particular structure of woman's identity. The following are some suggestions:

1. Women and the priesthood
2. Adultery and the history of law
3. Monasticism and woman's identity
4. The individual lives of women saints
5. Secular chastity of professional women in 18th and 19th centuries.

The structure which we have called 'The Virgin Goddess' is merely a point of departure for a wide range of considerations. In general, however, the subjects are linked together wither through their elevation of women spiritually and morally or through their connection with virginity and chastity. Need it be added that these two themes have been joined together in western history and form a significant aspect of the structure of woman's identity.

## PHOTOGRAPHS:

- A. Venus of Willendorf(30,000)B.C., Meniger,p.75, 78, 79., Newmann, p. 1.
- B. Mesopotamia (24,000) B.C., Newmann, 10-11, 35, 87.
- C. Feininger (4,000-200)B.C., Meniger, p. 40-4, 97; Prinb 23-37.
- D. Goddess of death, Newmann, p. 71, 66.
- E. Snake, Goddess, Newmann, p. 56, 59. Crete - Stone p. 162.
- 8. Mother-Son (Mary) Meniger, p. 40, 42, 44.
- 6. Isis, Stone-winged, p. 162-3. B. p. 353, Meniger, P. 51 Isis, p. 53 Madonna, p.56
- H. Athena, B. 128, 129, 131, 133.
- H<sup>1</sup>. p. 373.
- I. Demeter, B. p. 71.
- J. Artimes, B. p. 381.
- K. Aphrodite, B.B. 375 and Botticelli.
- L. Hestia - Vestal virgins.
- M. Hera, B. p. 40.
- N. Dionysus B. p. 209.
- O. Apollo, B. p. 365.

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